

Amendment(s) to the Drawings:

The attached sheets of drawings include changes to FIGS. 4 and 7 and replace the original sheets including FIGS. 4 and 7.

In FIG. 4, please replace “36” with --37--, “37” with --36--, and “45” with --46-- as shown in the attached replacement figure.

In FIG. 7, please replace “36” with --37-- and “37” with --36-- as shown in the attached replacement figure.

Attachment: Replacement Sheets for all Drawings
Annotated Sheets Showing Changes to FIGS. 4 and 7

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

In response to the Office Action dated February 21, 2007, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 1-5 and 11-13 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Pat. Pub. No. 2002/0104428 (Wilson) in view of U.S. Pat. No. 4,951,543 (Cipriani). Claims 6-10 and 14-16 stand rejected as being unpatentable over Wilson, in view of Cipriani, as applied to claims 1-3 and 11 above, and further in view of U.S. Pat. No. 5,260,505 (Kendall).

Applicant respectfully asserts that claims 1-5 and 11-13 are patentable over Wilson in view of Cipriani. Independent claim 1 recites a stringed instrument comprising a solid body, a retainer block encompassed by a rear surface of the body, and a plurality of strings retained by the retainer block. Wilson discusses an electric guitar 10 that has strings 24 extending through apertures 25 in a solid body 12 and through individual tubular sleeves 30 in the apertures 25. The strings 24 terminate at enlarged end caps 26 in a hollowed portion of the body 12. The strings 24 do not extend through a retainer block encompassed by a rear surface of the body 12. Cipriani discusses an acoustic guitar 1 with a bridge arrangement including an undersurface cross bar brace 20 (FIG. 4B). The brace 20 is disposed on a rear surface of a sound board cover 8, i.e., on the inside of the hollow guitar 1. Cipriani shows a piece embedded in the brace 20, which the Examiner equated to the recited retainer block. It would not, however, have been obvious to combine this piece of Cipriani's acoustic guitar with the electric guitar of Wilson. First, the retainer block recited in claim 1, with the recited plurality of strings retained by the retainer block, will impart different tonal characteristics to the strings of the instrument recited in claim 1 than the instrument discussed in Wilson. See application, p. 5, ll. 18-19. It would not be obvious to use a device "to provide a more effective reinforcing structure for attaching the strings to the body of the instrument" if that would mean changing the tonal characteristics of the instrument. Second, Wilson discusses the individuality of the mechanisms

for the strings in Wilson's guitar. In Wilson, the strings 24 extend through individual tubular sleeves 30. It would, therefore, not be obvious to extend a plurality of the strings 24 through a retainer block as recited in claim 1. For at least these reasons, independent claim 1, and claims 2-5 and 11-13 that depend from claim 1, are not obvious in view of Wilson and Cipriani.

Applicant respectfully asserts that claims 6-10 and 14-16 are patentable over Wilson in view of Cipriani in view of Kendall. Kendall does not make up for the deficiencies noted with respect to Wilson and Cipriani and thus claims 6-10 and 14-16, that depend from claim 1, are patentable over Wilson in view of Cipriani in view of Kendall for at least the reasons discussed above.

New claim

Claim 17 has been added. Claim 17 does not add new matter and depends from claim 1 and is thus patentable for at least the reasons discussed above with respect to claim 1.

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Appl. No. 10/674,705
Amdt. dated September 7, 2007
Amendment under 37 CFR 1.116 Expedited Procedure
Examining Group 2837

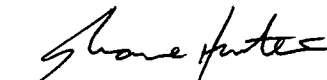
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CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicants believe all claims now pending in this Application are in condition for allowance and an action to that end is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, please telephone the undersigned at 858-350-6100.

Respectfully submitted,


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Attachments
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